



NATIONAL WEATHER
SERVICE -
SEATTLE/TACOMA

SKYWARN® Spotter News

www.weather.gov/seattle

S U M M E R 2 0 1 6

Summer Weather Spotting

Summer has arrived and along with it, our warmest and driest time of the year. Yet, summer weather can be hazardous. Let's review these summer season hazards so you are better prepared to report your significant weather. Thunderstorms produce lightning and can generate strong damaging winds, large hail, heavy amounts of rainfall leading to flash or small stream flooding, funnel clouds and even tornadoes and waterspouts. Recall your safety rules. If thunderstorms are forecast, keep an eye to the sky. If a thunderstorm approaches, seek shelter now – When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!



Cumulonimbus cloud over Snohomish county, seen from Lake Washington (June, 2016)

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Avoid using electrical appliances, the phone or any plumbing fixtures during the storm. Per our weather spotter training, side flashes from nearby lightning strikes can get into your home or business wiring and plumbing. If caught outdoors away from any shelters or buildings, find a low spot away from trees or other tall structures that lightning tends to strike.

When safe conditions permit, report the thunderstorm related events found on your spotter criteria sheet. For more information and even fun games about lightning, visit the lightning safety web site at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

Some thunderstorm events occur when a “marine push” begins. A marine push is a surge of cooler Pacific Ocean marine air accompanied by strong blustery winds that dramatically cool western Washington down in the wake of a period of hot weather.

Extended periods of hot weather are rather rare in our area. The interior of Western Washington averages only 3 or 4 days a year in the 90s. Yet last year, SeaTac Airport had 12 days of 90 degrees or better – a new record. When we get hot spells, residents are not used to it.

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Spotter reports provide 'ground truth' during hazardous weather. Look for Spotter weather training courses in your area soon.

Pac NW Golf outing set for Aug 13 at Fort Lewis Eagles Pride Golf Course



Spotter Training Update

More spotter training sessions are being planned for this fall, when interest in the program is highest as we enter the coming winter storm season. Targeted areas at this time include Mason, Skagit, Grays Harbor, Pierce, King, Jefferson, Clallam, and Lewis counties.

Watch our web site at www.weather.gov/seattle or your mailbox for spotter training announcements as they become available.



Pacific NW Scramble Date Set

The Pacific Northwest Weather Scramble Golf Tournament is set for Saturday, August 13, at Fort Lewis Golf Course near Tacoma. Skywarn Weather Spotters, friends and family are welcome to play in this fun networking outing. Others involved in the weather community, such as media, emergency managers, and other agencies, also play. Entries and more information are now available by contacting Ted Buehner at NWS Seattle, 206-526-6095 x223. Hurry, the entry deadline is August 3rd, and many paid entries have already arrived. The course limits this event to 48 players.

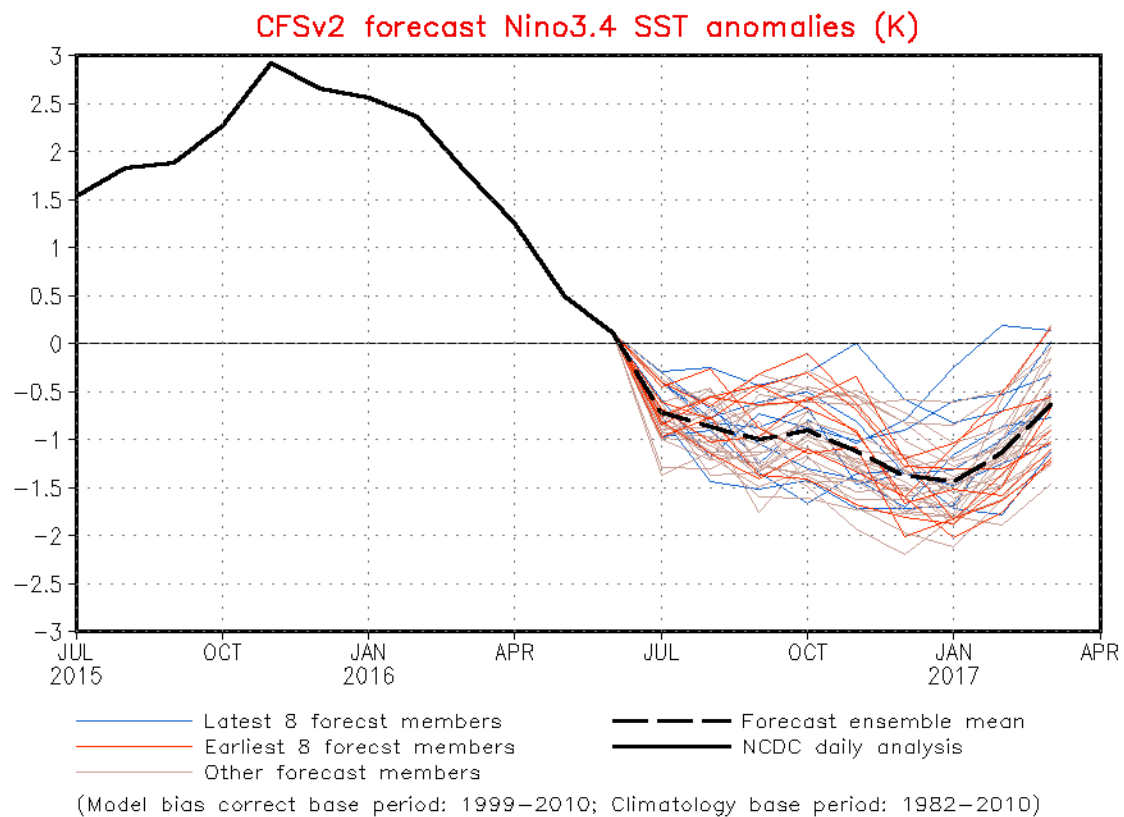
La Niña Watch

The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center (CPC) issued a La Niña Watch in early June. A La Niña Watch means conditions are favorable for a transition from this past winter's warm El Niño to La Niña by this fall. If this comes to pass, then we will experience La Niña conditions during the coming winter season with overall cooler and wetter than average conditions and a healthy mountain snowpack. For complete details, visit the headline on our web site.



NWS/NCEP/CPC

Last update: Tue Jun 28 2016
Initial conditions: 29May2016–7Jun2016



Forecast Nino3.4 sea surface temperature anomalies in the equatorial Pacific from the
NWS Climate Prediction Center

Summer cont...

From page 1...

**All-time
record high
temperature
at SeaTac is
103 degrees F
on 7/29/2009**

Remember July 29, 2009 when SeaTac Airport hit an all-time record of 103 degrees, Bellingham 96, and Olympia 104? We were in the midst of a hot spell that peaked on that day.

Heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths across our nation, including Washington state. Statistics show that just in the Seattle area alone, the city averages four hot weather related deaths per summer since the mid 1970s, and had as many as 60 deaths during the warm summer of 1992. The statistics for the summer of 2015 are not yet available from the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Most heat-related deaths are not direct heat-related illnesses like heat stress or heat stroke, but rather more indirect health issues, such as heart attack, stroke and respiratory illnesses. The most heat-related vulnerable include the elderly and the very young. In addition, too many fatalities occur on our area waterways due to the cold water and people not wearing life-jackets. As a King County Sheriff's Dept Marine Rescue Unit Deputy said, "I have never recovered a body on the bottom wearing a life jacket."

During these hot weather periods, be sure to drink plenty of water, avoid strenuous activities during the heat of the day, and find cooler locations like shade or an air conditioned building for at least 2 hours of relief from the heat. Avoid leaving young children or pets in a vehicle. Even with the windows down, temperatures climb to over 105degrees in just 10 minutes. For more information, please visit the Weather Safety link on our web site at www.weather.gov/seattle.

Monitor weather forecasts this summer by visiting our web site or by listening to your local NOAA Weather Radio network station. If significant summer weather is forecast like we have already had this year, you'll be prepared for it and ready to report any significant weather. Enjoy your summer!



Only You Can Prevent Wildfires

The latest outlook from the NWS Climate Prediction Center for this summer's weather is for greater odds on a warmer than 30-year average summer, and tips the odds to below normal precipitation. Our summers are usually warm and dry, and that appears to be the case this season. Our moist winter helped generate a healthy crop of grasses and shrubs.



July into September is our driest time of the year. With the warm dry weather, grasses and scrubs cure, meaning these fine fuels are ready to accept fire. So our wildfire season will be upon us before we know it. We have already experienced a number of roadside fires recently.

As a weather spotter, what does all this mean to you? From your spotter report criteria, be aware of days following an extended period of warm dry weather when thunderstorms are in the forecast, particularly those with little or no rainfall expected. If you see frequent lightning (at least 4 or more cloud to ground strikes in a minute), contact our office with that report. If you see smoke from an apparent wildfire start, call 911 and let fire response know. This is particularly important if the smoke is near an area of homes and businesses that could turn into an urban interface wildfire if not stopped right away.

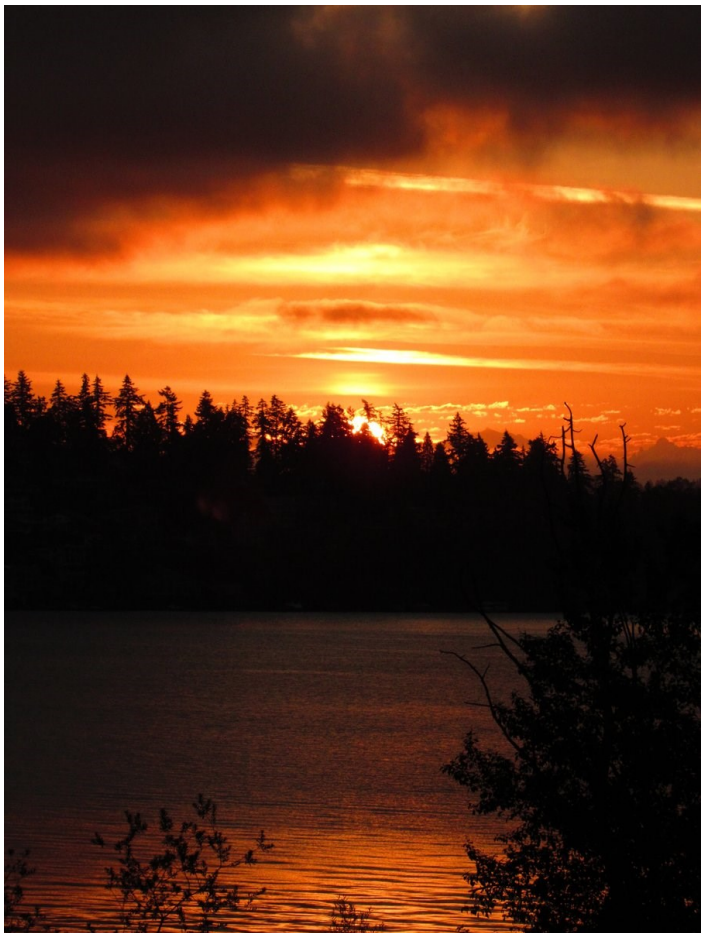
In addition, here are some steps you can take to help prevent wildfires and keep your home safe.

- Be careful with fire outside such as open burning, campfires or barbecues.
- Use your vehicle's ashtray to extinguish cigarettes instead of tossing it out the window. (Also avoid a healthy fine if caught!)
- Avoid taking your vehicle into grassy areas since your hot exhaust system can ignite grass.
- If you live in a wooded area whether it is in a city or rural setting, be firewise and remove dead yard materials from within 30 feet of your home, trim tree limbs up off the ground to above your head, and remove wood piles next to the house. Please visit www.firewise.org for more tips to help your home not become a wildfire victim.

Trivia Question

What are the all-time record high temperatures for these communities? And do you know the date it occurred? The answers are elsewhere in Skywarn Spotter News.

	Degrees F
Port Angeles	94, 96, or 102
Aberdeen	107, 105, or 100
Clearbrook (Whatcom County)	98, 100, or 102
Monroe	100, 102, or 104
Bremerton	100, 102, or 104
Kent	100, 102, or 104



Sunrise over Lake Washington at NWS in North Seattle, June 2016

Spotter Reports Wanted!

During this past winter season, we received a number of weather spotter reports during our wind, rain and snow/ice events. Yet with now over 1600 Skywarn spotters in Western Washington, there should be far more reports, particularly after we have provided snow boards, snow stakes and rain gages at spotter training. Spotter reports provide 'ground truth' regarding what is happening out there during our hazardous weather. If you see significant weather per your spotter criteria sheet, call us! No need to be shy! We may not be fully aware of what is going on where you are! If you need a copy of the criteria sheet, contact Jay Neher at jay.neher@noaa.gov. Thanks!!

CoCoRaHS Update

Thanks again to all the CoCoRaHS spotters across the region. We now have over 1200 registered "CoCoRaisins" across Washington. Way to go! June 1 marked the 8 year anniversary since WA state joined CoCoRaHS. And June 17th was the 18th birthday of the CoCoRaHS website launch. The Bahamas just joined a few weeks ago.

NWS Seattle has a summary table of the daily precipitation reports from western WA CoCoRaHS observers. You'll find it on our web page here:

www.wrh.noaa.gov/sew/observations.php

Don't forget to report zeroes! Not only is it important to know where it rained, it is also important to know where it didn't. There is a CoCoRaHS app for both [Android](#) and [iOS](#) which makes data entry very easy and convenient.

If you haven't done so already, please check out www.cocorahs.org for more information about the CoCoRaHS program. There's no limit to the number of observers...so join today!



20th Anniversary Screening of *Twister*

Seattle Emergency Management partnered with NWS Seattle to hold a unique event on May 19, 2016, a 20th anniversary screening of the movie *Twister*. The special movie screening supported by Warner Brothers and Universal Studios was held at Seattle's Central Cinema during one of their 'Dinner and a Disaster' movie showings.

The timing of *Twister*'s debut in May of 1996 helped raise the nation's knowledge about and preparedness regarding tornadoes. The movie resulted in other tornado-related television programming, sparked greater interest in the Skywarn weather spotter program, and coincided with the completion of the nation's Doppler weather radar network. In addition, more people had video cameras documenting more tornado events than ever before.

NWS Seattle arranged a special screening of the movie in May of 1996 at the Mountlake 9 Theater. Nearly one hundred Skywarn weather spotters and amateur radio volunteers attended that showing.

Twenty years later, this special movie screening was sold out and included weather spotters, amateur radio volunteers, emergency management personnel, other weather enthusiasts and the general public. This cinema house also uses Hecklevision – a movie theater that actually permits use of smart phones with text messages that appear on the movie screen during the film, a fun and very adult experience.

Prior to the screening, Seattle Emergency Management's Matt Auflick and WFO Seattle WCM Ted Buehner offered some Washington tornado highlights and safety tips to the audience. Washington averages between one and two tornadoes per year. Most tornadoes have been quite weak – EF0 or EF1 going back to 1950. Yet 1997 had a record 14 tornadoes. The Evergreen State has also had three EF3 tornadoes including one on April 5, 1972, that struck Vancouver killing six people and injuring several hundred as it plowed through a grocery store, bowling house and an elementary school. Washington led the nation in tornado deaths that year.

The special screening of *Twister* was very well received and quite successful. Everyone had a good time.

As the theater manager Doug Willott said, "This was one of our best showings ever!"



Seattle's Central Cinema screening of *Twister*

"I gotta go,
Julia, we
got cows!"

National Weather Service Seattle

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Climate Newsletter

The Office of the Washington State Climatologist produces a monthly weather summary that is available online or by email. To view OWSC's latest newsletter please visit:

www.climate.washington.edu/newsletter

Feedback!

Your feedback is wanted! Please let us know...

What would you like to see in future Skywarn newsletters?

Additional spotter training?

CoCoRaHS training?

Comments or questions?

Contact jeff.michalski@noaa.gov

Trivia Question Answers

Port Angeles

94, Aug 9, 1981

Aberdeen

100, Sep 3, 1988

Clearbrook (Whatcom County)

102, Jul 27, 1958

Monroe

102, Jul 29, 2009

Bremerton

102, Aug 9, 1981

Kent

104, Jul 29, 2009